

Testimony of Bayly Hoehne  
Chair of Connecticut High School Democrats  
Voters of Tomorrow

Government and Elections Committee February 22, 2023

HB 5004 An Act Implementing Early Voting  
SB 1057 An Act Concerning the Secretary of the State and Early Voting  
SB 1064 An Act Concerning the Implementation of Early Voting  
SJ 29 Resolution Approving an Amendment to the State Constitution to Allow No-Excuse Absentee Voting  
HJ 1 Resolution Approving a State Constitutional Amendment to Allow No-Excuse Absentee Voting  
HB 6693 An Act Concerning Absentee Voting

Good afternoon, Senator Flexer, Representative Blumenthal and members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee.

My name is Bayly Hoehne, I am a high school sophomore at Torrington High School, and proud to serve as the Chair of Connecticut High School Democrats. In addition, I also work with Voters of Tomorrow, a nationwide, nonpartisan, Gen z civic engagement organization with hundreds of volunteers stretched across twenty-eight states, where I proudly advocate for the voting rights of my generation. I am sorry I cannot be with you in person today.

Here in Connecticut, we lead the nation in many things, and I am proud that we now have the opportunity to implement early voting. Young voters are new voters, and the process to register to vote and cast a ballot can be confusing for those who are not familiar with what to expect, or who may live on a college campus or away from home. Connecticut voters decided overwhelmingly that early voting was a necessary step, and it is now your turn that into tangible policy.

Voters in our state should have at least two weeks of early voting, being sure to allow for at least one weekend, and later evening hours. Many young people attend school or work far from their polling places and do not have their own transportation. This makes it difficult for them to vote between the normal hours of six AM and eight PM.

I ask the committee to join thirty-five other states and allow for no-excuse absentee voting, and allow the town clerks to deliver absentee ballots to counters before six in the evening and include prepaid postage for the return of absentee ballots.

Allowing a longer voting period and no excuse absentee voting promotes democracy, encourages civic engagement, avoids conflicts and lines at the polls, increases turnout, and provides greater accessibility for underserved and underrepresented communities. Sixty percent of voters gave you the power to make a meaningful change to our voting laws, and I ask you to be bold and think of all of the ways you can make voting easier for all.

Young people like myself have shown that they are starting to care more about who represents them now more than ever, and by allowing comprehensive early voting here in Connecticut, we are making it one step easier to getting more youth to the polls.